

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, MX

SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY

LIC. FRANCISCO JAVIER ALEJO

1. SUMMARY: DURING COURTESY CALL THE AMBASSADOR AND ECONOMIC COUNSELOR MADE FEB. 21 ON RECENTLY APPOINTED SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY, FRANCISCO JAVIER ALEJO, LATTER EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE, THOUGH REASONED, ADMIRATION FOR CUBA AND CASTRO AND WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWEST MEXICO. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REPLY TO THE AMBASSADOR'S OPENING COMMENTS, ALEJO SAID THAT HIS MINISTRY COVERED A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES. IN MANY RESPECTS IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR IN THE U.S. AND HAD MANY OF THE SAME PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WAS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BUREAUCRACY BUT AS IN BUREAUCRACIES EVERYWHERE, CHANGE WAS RESISTED. ECHEVERRIA HAD HOPED TO STIMULATE WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY ITSELF AN AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT BUT THE EFFECTS OF THIS WERE YET TO BE SEEN.

3. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT THE RELATIONS OF  
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HIS MINISTRY WITH U.S. INTERESTS, ALEJO SAID THINGS

WERE GOING WELL. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE GAVE AN ENTHUSIASTIC ACCOUNT OF A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN TEXAS GULF SULPHUR AND GOM TO DEVELOP SULPHUR PRODUCTS IN THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC. SETTING SOMETHING OF A NEW PATTERN FOR MEXICO, THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WAS BUYING A NUMBER OF SHARES IN TEXAS GULF SULPHUR. HE SAID THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ALREADY HAD A LARGE GROUP OF SHARES IN THIS FIRM AND AGREED THAT TEXAS GULF SULPHUR WAS NOW TRULY A TRANSNATIONAL FIRM.

4. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ALEJO ABOUT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S PARTICIPATION IN FERTICA, S.A. IN COSTA RICA, GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR. ALEJO SHOWED SOME INTEREST IN REDUCING THE LARGE MEXICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRM. HE SAID THAT IN THE REGION OF THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO THE SOUTH ONE HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL OF ONE'S IMAGE AS THE "COLOSSUS OF THE NORTH."

5. NOTING THAT ALEJO HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN CUBA, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HIM WHAT HIS IMPRESSIONS WERE. ALEJO RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE CUBANS THEMSELVES MIGHT SOMETIMES HAVE A TOUCH OF MADNESS HE FOUND CASTRO REASONABLE AND REALISTIC. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE HAD BEEN LIKE BEFORE BUT HE DIDN'T THINK A MAN WOULD CHANGE THAT MUCH. ALEJO SAID THINGS HAD UNDOUBTEDLY IMPROVED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE; CUBA HAD OBVIOUSLY MADE A BIG INVESTMENT IN ITS HUMAN RESOURCES. HE FOUND PARTICULARLY INTERESTING HOW CUBA HAD CHANGED BETWEEN HIS VISIT IN SEPTEMBER OF 1973 AND JANUARY OF 1974. ALEJO ATTRIBUTED THIS MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF CUBANS TO THE RENEWED PRESENCE OF WEST GERMANY. CUBA NOW HAD A WINDOW ON THE WEST AND ACCESS TO WEST EUROPEAN SUPPLIES, TECHNOLOGY AND CREDIT AND IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A WELCOME ALTERNATIVE TO THE ALL TOO PERVASIVENESS OF THE SOVIET INFLUENCE.

6. FOLLOWING A BRIEF INTERRUPTION THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ALEJO ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN BAJA CALIFORNIA. ALEJO SAID THAT THEY HAD EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS, PARTICULARLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS TO QUALITY. HE EXPECTED COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION TO BE UNDER WAY WITHIN A YEAR. HE SAID IT WAS FORTUITOUS THAT THESE DEPOSITS WERE LOCATED 100 KILOMETERS FROM MEXICO'S BEST PORT ON THE PACIFIC SIDE. THE LOCATION WAS ADDITIONALLY FORTUNATE IN THAT IT IS THE MEXICAN NORTHWESTERN AREAS, SUCH AS SINALOA, THAT ARE THE MAJOR USERS OF FERTILIZERS. A LARGE FERTILIZER COMPLEX WAS BEING ESTABLISHED AT GUAYMAS AND THIS INDUSTRIAL

ACTIVITY WOULD HAVE THE FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF OBTAINING SULPHURIC ACID FROM THE RELATIVELY NEARBY COPPER MINES. THERE WAS EVEN SOME POSSIBILITY FOR EXPORT; CANADA WAS INTERESTED IN THE PACIFIC COAST SUPPLY OF PHOSPHATE.

7. ALEJO DID NOT RESPOND IN DETAIL TO OUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PETROLEUM DEPOSITS IN BAJA CALIFORNIA. HE SAID THAT ON THE OTHER HAND THE RUMORED OIL DEPOSITS NEAR LAREDO WERE TURNING OUT TO BE MAINLY NATURAL GAS.

8. ALEJO SEEMS ALERT, INTELLIGENT AND ENERGETIC, AND DID NOT EXHIBIT THE LEFTIST ECONOMIC DOGMATISM THAT HAD BEEN A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO SOME CIRCLES BEFORE HIS APPOINTMENT TO HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICE. HE IS, OF COURSE, YOUNG (33 YEARS OLD) AS MEXICAN GOVERNMENT MINISTERS GO AND WE ANTICIPATE A BRIGHT POLITICAL FUTURE FOR HIM, THOUGH THE RUMORS OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY FOR 1976 ARE PROBABLY WITHOUT MUCH BASIS.

9. HE HAS CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL MAGNETISM AND CHARM AND IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT HE HAS ACQUIRED CONSIDERABLE ASCENDENCY OVER BOTH PRESIDENT AND MRS. ECHEVERRIA AND IS THE SOURCE OF MANY OF THEIR NEW IDEAS AND CONCEPTS.

10. ON THE NEXT DAY AMBASSADOR JOVA HAD A SECOND MORE CASUAL CONVERSATION WITH ALEJO AT A SOCIAL OCCASION. HE THEN SPOKE AT GREAT LENGTH OF THE MEXICAN AGRARIAN PROBLEM WHICH FOR IDEALOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL REASONS DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO EASY SOLUTION. ALEJO SAID THAT THE HEAVILY POPULATED EJIDOS MUST BE CONVERED TO "COLLECTIVES", WHILE ON THINLY POPULATED AREAS THEY COULD BE OPERATED IN A CAPITALIST FASHION IN ASSOCIATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES. JOVA

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